

Science Explains Why Girls Kiss Strange Soldiers "Good-Bye"

Perplexing Manifestations of Affection Displayed by Women During the Recent Departure of Our National Guard Analyzed Curiously by the Distinguished Dr. Max Baff



The Russian Painter Vasnetsov's Remarkable Painting of Primitive Men and Women Killing a Mammoth That Has Been Trapped for Food. Constant Ancient Struggle of Women for Existence, of Which This Is a Type, Implanted in Her a Worship of Force, According to Dr. Baff, to Which She Still Responds When She Sees Soldiers Who Symbolize to Her All the Old Ideas Both of Protection and Comfort.

By Dr. Max Baff.

The Distinguished Authority on Feminine Psychology.

THE recent departure for the Mexican border of companies of the National Guard was marked by an extraordinary outbreak of kissing. At the armories, at the station and at stops en route the soldiers were kissed by whole beves of girls. The girls and soldiers, kissers and kissees, in few cases knew each other. Ordinarily they were entire strangers. The prettiest girl in Clearfield, Pennsylvania tried her best to kiss an entire regiment. She nearly succeeded.

Not long before, no doubt, many of these impulsive ladies had been singing earnestly that they "did not raise their boy to be a soldier." Why then did they embrace so impetuously some boy whose mother did raise him to be a soldier? Why in every outbreak of war or threatened outbreak are these same scenes presented? Why does the sight of soldiers raise women to such emotional heights? Why does she love a uniform? Shall I try to answer these questions?

Women kiss soldiers because they are still savages, still primitive, lovers of strength, worshippers of force. "What a big, strong fellow," they will say, their gentle eyes lighting up as they rest upon some stalwart specimen. But they never say, "What a fine weak, little fellow." Man on the contrary, rarely praises bigness and stalwartness in the female. "What a lovely little girl," says man. Woman, the primitive, still sub-consciously and consciously looks on man as the protector. The stranger the protector, the better he can protect. Hence woman's viewpoint. Man, accustomed for ages to be the protector, sub-consciously resents the strong big woman. She hurts his pride, because she looks as though she can take care of herself. Hence the man's viewpoint.

Here then, we strike the first element in the soldier kissing phenomenon. The soldier represents force. Woman, watching him swinging by in all the panoply of force, reacts to the ancient impulse. She is swept with emotion. The kissing follows.

But there is a second and a more surprising element that enters into the matter. Woman is essentially a blood lover. She loves its color and she sub-consciously delights in the thought of it. Soldiers go forth to kill. Their uniform, no matter what its color, is a symbol of slaughter, of red. For this same reason women are attracted to a fresh complexion, a ruddy face.

Being primitive, woman is also a passionate lover of color. Witness her ribbons, her beads, her shining stones, her feathers. She takes the same delight in them as does the savage—because she is still the savage.

In the soldier then there are three intensely compelling factors of her emotions. The idea of force, which means to her protection; the idea of blood whose curious fascination will be explained later; and the appeal to color. The complex is irresistible.

Let us go back a little. Every primitive race held blood in the highest reverence. It was a mystical fluid. And why not? When our first ancestors, the ape men, fought they knew that to kill they must let this red stream flow. The ape woman, watching the struggle, knew she would belong to him who made it flow. When the game was hunted the man brought back the streaming carcass to his mate and her fire in the cave. The blood meant food. The savage drank

the blood of his enemy, thinking that thereby he drew into himself his slain foe's strength. "In the blood is the life," says the Bible.

And so blood enters intimately into the life of the primitive. Woman, closer to the past than man, answers and thrills to its call. When the men of to-day go to war she promptly answers to all these sub-conscious, these hereditary memories. These are her men, her "big, strong men" going forth to fight for her. They are her heroes going out to bring in the mammoth for her food. She does not think of them as human units going forth to fight for patriotic ideals. They are going forth for her. The memories of the past rise in force and dim the facts of the present. Emotion surcharges her. She kisses them.

Let us consider now the factor of color. Woman, as I have said, being savage loves color inordinately. The assemblage of a vast number of uniforms, which in the case of soldiers are of unusual colors, is intensely pleasing to her. Even khaki, which is neutral, becomes positive to her because it is not commonly worn by man in civil life.

But of all the colors there is one, compelling both to women and men and singularly compelling to women—it is red. In every flag it has the same significance—blood. And there are few flags in which it is lacking. The flag had its origin in war; and nothing is more primitive than war. Not only do the flags bear the impression of their savage birth, but similarly do the nation's emblems. The eagles of Russia, of Germany, of Austria, the British lion—all are creatures of prey.

The primitive thrills to the primitive. War calls forth the savage in woman.

This red paper on my desk I will see four times, perhaps, while I am looking for something else. I will even stop to examine it, forgetting what it is I seek, so strong is its lure. Red is chosen for a danger signal not because it can be seen farthest. As a matter of fact red is one of the colors that fades quickest from view at a distance. Bright scarlet can be seen farther than khaki, it is true, but there are other colors seemingly duller, that can be distinguished at distances where scarlet does not show. Red is chosen for a danger signal because it attracts attention imperiously.

A red tie, a red bow or flower on the lapel, a red flag among a group of men, all these will irresistibly attract women. It moves them subconsciously.

And the color of war is red and war's men to women go bathed in that compelling color of their master.

I would advise all lovers, all husbands, always to have some touch of red about their clothes.

And so we see it is not the men themselves who are kissed. What is kissed is the symbol, the ancient ideal. The soldiers are kissed because of the uniform and the age old memories it conjures up in woman's breast. If there is any doubt of it put a row of ten uniforms in one window and ten men in civilian dress in another and see which window draws the most women.

I found the strongest proof of this at the Massachusetts master ground in Framingham, only a few miles from my home. I saw a company prepare to train. The girls who lined the route gazed at the men longingly until one, a little bolder than the rest, rushed out and kissed a soldier. Her example was all that was necessary. As if at a signal, the other girls picked out the militiamen, and kissed them incessantly until they were on the train. Even then a few succeeded in getting themselves held up to windows to continue the kissing.

I saw coming to the camp a group of "rookies" not in uniform, young men in dusty civilian clothing. They had no appeal for the girls. The fact that each was a potential hero, quite as good as any in khaki, did not present itself to the women. Not one was kissed although each tried in every way to show that he was eager for caresses.

Coxey's army, in spick and span uniforms, would be met by beves of girls and the marchers would be kissed ad lib.

To recapitulate, then, up to this point: Woman is primitive, ages further back than man. This being so, the instincts within her respond immediately to the idea of force, of strength. She reacts to the two dominant ideas of protection and food, symbolized in the thought of blood. Being a savage, she reacts instinctively and vigorously to a color impulse.

In the soldier going to war she sees her ancient protector and her ancient food-getter. At the same time all the thoughts and feelings bred in her through ages of warfare become dominant. Lastly, she is gripped in the vibrations of her acute color sense. Emotionalism runs alive and she finds vent for it in the kiss.

And now let us take up still a fourth phase of the matter—one that really partakes of all the other phases. I refer to woman's mental instability; or perhaps it would be better to say her one-idea stability. Her primitiveness makes most women capable of only seeing one idea at a time, and everything that would tend to inhibit that vision is put out of mind until the thing upon which the concentration is directed is gone from the mind by the natural course of events.

Modesty is inborn in woman, but it is a modesty that is dependent upon environment. It is subject also to emotion, far more than is man's. It runs counter

to a woman's modesty to kiss a strange man in public. Given certain stimuli to emotion, however, the feeling of modesty is subordinated.

In illustration of what I say of woman's inability to think of more than one thing at a time, let me give you an instance. Last night there was an accident near my house. The patient, a man, made little of his injuries; but a woman witness went into hysterics and had to be given careful attention for three hours. Through all that time there was only one picture in her mind—that of the injury to the man. Except for the pain, the man had no vision of his injury after fifteen minutes.

So it is when troops go to war. The men are able to think, and do think, of other things, not only the masculine on-lookers but the soldiers themselves as they march. Other ideas, other interests, preoccupy them.

But woman, the one-idea creature, sees nothing but the compelling synthesis of all the pictures of her primitive past. Her emotions surcharge her. She gives herself up, perforce to exultation. Conventions, modern habits and modesty go by the board.

And the irony of it! The soldier responds to the admiration. He feels heroic. He is quite ready to go out and get shot—and if he knows the girl and the girl is really dear to him, the memory of her caress may inspire him to superhuman deeds in battle.

And, alas, she loves not him but his uniform! She reacts not to the man but to her ancestral memories. To Nature the individual itself is nothing. And to woman, whose great "raison d'être" is the perpetuation of the race, the individual, no matter how much she may befool herself, is nothing. Because woman, being still a savage, is herself nature.



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This Interesting Photograph of a Girl Kissing Soldiers "Good-Bye" Is a Direct Reflection from Ancient Times, According to Dr. Baff, and Similar in Its "Stimulus" to the Scene Pictured Below.

Woman Has Always Worshipped Force, Says the Psychologist. Back in Ancient Rome the Tenderesses and Admiration That They Lavished on the Brutal Gladiators Were Simply a Manifestation of Their Instinctive Respect for Strength, Bred Through Ages of Strife.



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